

# Manifestations *of the* Shadowless Presence

*chosen from among the*  
Tarbiyah *of the* Prophet Muḥammad,  
blessings of Allāh and Peace be upon him,  
upon his family & his companions  
throughout time

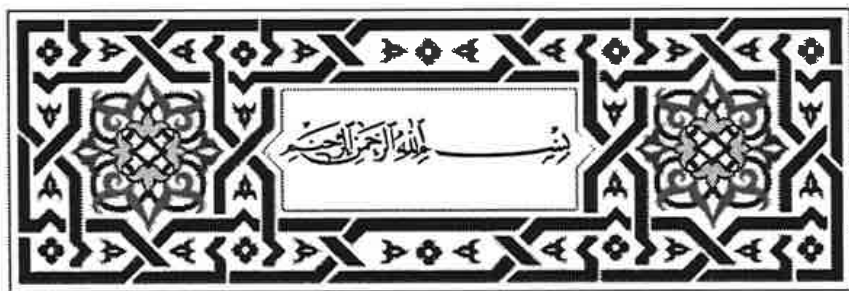


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## *manifestations of the shadowless presence*

Praise be to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds who, through His Eternal Word, does not cease to be praised: The Compassionate, The Mercy Full, Who by His Mercy has stirred up within us gratitude for His goodness wherewith He has enriched us and inspired us to praise and glorify Him.

The limits of favour and the bounds of praise were extended when He promised to those grateful for His bounty still more blessings; and He spread wide the carpet of His Assembly to those who remember Him. He it is who has brought into subjection all things according to His Wisdom and Equity, as He has willed, by His Power, so that by His Authority the mover remains still and the still moves. The Controller of expansion {*baṣṭ*} and contraction {*qabḍ*}, *“The Knower of the Unseen {al-ghayb}; not even the weight of an atom, or less than that or greater than that, either in the heavens or on the earth escapes Him.”* {34:3} *“He is the First and the Last, The Outer and the Inner,”* {*al-ʾawālu wa-l-ʾākḥiru wa-ḍḡāhiru wa-l-bātin*} {57:3}

We praise Him with the praise of those who know Him with true knowledge of Him. We give thanks to Him with the expressions of gratitude of those who acknowledge the perfection of His goodness and favour. We bear witness that there is no deity other than Allāh alone, having no companion, with an affirmation to which no doubt is attached and before which no door closes from accepting. We testify that in speaking of human perfection that we speak first of our liege-lord Muḥammad, the Perfect Worshipper {*ʿabdu-llāh*}, His Slave and Prophet and Messenger chosen from the mine of pure nobility, selected from a family of honour. Allāh bless and save him, with a blessing that will bring us to him and gather us around him on the Day of Assembly and Reckoning. May Allāh be pleased with his family, his helpers, his descendants, the people of his household, his illustrious companions, the best of friends, as long as a star will shine, the moon shall rise and a cloud shall float above the face of the earth.

In praising the Prophet I praise all the Prophets and Messengers, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon them, for, as I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Prophet and Messenger of Allāh, so do I bear witness that there are upwards to some 124,000 Prophets that Allāh has sent to the people of the world and from among the many I bear specific witness to the Prophethood {nubuwa} of Adam, Idris, Nūḥ, Hud, Salih, Lūṭ, ʾIbrāhīm, Ismaʿil, Ishāq, Yaʿqūb, Yūsuf, Shuʿayb, Mūsā, Hārūn, Dawūd, Sulaymān, Ayyub, Dhū-l-Kifl, Yunus, Ilyās, al-Yasaʿ, Zakarriyah, Yahya, and ʿIsā, who are all related.

Each of them is both a source of guidance and a paradigm of perfection in his state {al-ʾahwāl}, in his works {al-muʾamalāt} and in his knowledge {al-ʿilm}. Each of these left an inheritance {wirāṭḥah} for those of his community who came after them; an inheritance existent both in the world of that which is revealed {dhāhir} and in the world of that which is concealed {bāṭin}. Each of them had his station {maqām} with Allāh and, although in consonance with the Words of Allāh, “*we make no distinction between any one of His Messengers*” {2:136} we also bear witness that the Prophet Muḥammad is, as Allāh has named him, the “*Seal of all the Prophets*” {kḥātama-n-nabiyyin} {33:40} and as such it is he who is the ultimate inheritor {wārith} of all the prophetic states, all the prophetic works and all the prophetic knowledge of those who went before, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him and them. As such it is he, the perfected and perfect man {al-ʾinsānu-l-kāmil}, whose station is the universal station which embraces all of the stations {maqamāt} and is itself unencompassed.

﴿مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ  
وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ﴾

MA KĀNA MUHAMMADUN ʾABĀĀ ʾAHADIM-MIR-RIJĀLIKUM  
WA LĀKIR-RASŪLĀ-LLĀHI WA KḤĀTAMA-N-NABIYYIN:

Muḥammad is not the father of any one of your men  
but  
he is the Messenger of Allāh and the Seal of the Prophets.  
{33:40}

He, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, it is who is the “*Mercy to all the Worlds*” {raḥmatal-li-l-ʿalamin} {21:107} from the Very One whose, “*Mercy embraces all things*” {7:156} who teaches us what we know not and is for ever *ḥarīṣ* {9:128} over us that we might be among those bright faced beings, “*in the Mercy of Allāh dwelling in it forever*” {3:107}

He is effulgent from his absorption in the Beloved. Upon his face no shadow shows; to his friends he is a beacon whose light outshines the brightness of the day star, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

And though his face shines with the light of the full moon, yet well he knows that all this light is but the merest reflection of the Light {nūr} which is the Light of Allāh, the “*Light of the Heavens and the Earth*” {Q24:35} {Allāhu nūrus-s-samāwāti wa-l-ʿard}. For he was not only the most noble of men but he was also the most humble of men, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, who is described by the words, “*a clear proof from your Lord, a guidance and a mercy.*” {6:157}

The clear proof of the secret contained in his veridical saying, “I was a prophet while Adam was still between clay and water {bayna ʿīn wa māʿ}<sup>1</sup>” or, in another place, “between spirit and flesh” {bayna rūḥi wa-l-jasad}<sup>2</sup>. A secret attested to by Abū Hurayrah in his saying, may Allāh be pleased with him, that when the Messenger of Allāh was asked when the office of prophet had been established for him, replied, “When Adam had not yet had his spirit joined to his body.”<sup>3</sup>

This may be what is really meant by the prophetic saying “I have a time with Allāh that no angel or prophet can share with me.” and even closer to the heart are the various sayings of the like of, “The first thing Allāh created was my spirit” {rūḥi} and “He took the Light from His Wajh {His Face, His Presence} and said, “Be. Oh Muḥammad.”

For in as much as he existed in this world yet he existed before this world was, and before there was any existence in this earthly form, and it is of this we must first speak if we are to know who, or should we say what, it is of which we speak.

By saying this in no way do we deny him his earthly presence, but rather do we realise that even when he walked the earth many of those who were his own kith and kin never saw anything but the orphan son of ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbdu-l-Muṭṭalib. Even those who were as close to him as his own beloved nephew, our liege-lord Sayyidinā ʿAlī, may Allāh be kind to his face, when ʿUways al-Qarani, peace be upon him, asked him, “How many times did you see the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him?” said, “Oh ʿUways. I only saw him once in my entire life.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jamaʿ as-Ṣaḡḥir

<sup>2</sup>Ibn Abi Shayba (14:292, Tirmidhi (hasan sahih), and Hakim (sahih)

<sup>3</sup>at-Tirmidhi

<sup>4</sup>as reported in

In that one time that Sayyidinā ‘Alī, may Allah cherish his face, really saw the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, he knew<sup>5</sup> for ever that, truly and in reality {ḥaqīqah} “Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, is the heart of the Divine Presence.” It is this dimension of his pre-eternal existence that we must speak of if we hope to more fully understand his blessed being, ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, and, in reality {ḥaqīqah}, the true meaning of our own being and the Way we have been so generously given in order that we might live in this world in accord and perfect harmony with the Covenant we jointly made on the Day of ‘Alastu bi-rabbikum when Allāh asked, “*Am I not your Lord?*” {7:172}

How can we know what happened before time was, save from one who was before time began, before our own beginning both paradisaical and earthly? If we sift through the evidence, we find that the furthest back that can be remembered, beyond the sidrata al-muntahā, that “*lote tree of the uttermost limits close to the Garden of Bliss beyond which neither men nor angels may pass*” {53:14}, we see only light and it is that light, that Nūr-i-Muḥammad, which is the manifestation of the unmanifest that is the pure invisible and shadowless presence, with which we must concern ourselves. Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh, may Allah find contentment with him, said, “I asked, Oh Messenger of Allah! May my father and my mother be a sacrifice for you, could you please tell me of the first thing that Allāh created before all others? He replied, ‘Oh Jābir, Truly Allāh Most High, before anything else, created the light of your Prophet from His Light.’”<sup>6</sup>

﴿وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ﴾

WA LAQADĀ RA’ĀHU NAZLATAN ‘UKḥRĀ

And truly he saw Him yet another time  
{53:13}

Allāh says only two ‘āyah earlier

﴿مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ﴾

MA KADḥABA-L-FU‘ĀDU MĀ RA’Ā

the heart did not lie in what it saw  
{53:11}

<sup>5</sup>See pp 12-14 “Naqshbandi Sufi Way” by Shaykh Myhammad Hisham Kabbani

<sup>6</sup>Related by ‘Abdu-r-Razzaq as-Sanani in Musnaf

﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

ALLĀHU NŪRU-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA-L-ʿARD

Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth.  
{24:35}

And what is that pure invisible shadowless presence but spirit itself {ar-rūḥ}? This is perhaps why the version of the ḥadīth that has “between the body and the spirit” is stronger in its chain of transmission than the one with “between water and clay”, even though another version says “while Adam was still *munjadil*,” which is to say, not yet formed in his original clay.

The ʿimām Tāj al-Din al-Subkī said<sup>7</sup>: “It has been said that Allāh created spirits before bodies, and the Prophet's reference to his prophecy in the ḥadīth, ‘I was a Prophet while Adam was still...’ may be a reference to his blessed spirit and to the Reality of realities {ḥaqīqatu-l-ḥaqāʾiq}. And whilst our minds may fall short of knowing such a Reality, surely its Creator knows it, and also those to whom he extends the light of that knowledge.”

Shaykh ul-ʿAkbar, Allāh sanctify his secret, writing on this very subject, said, “Every Prophet from Adam to the last Prophet, peace and blessings be upon them all, takes from the niche {mishkāṭ} of the Seal of Prophets, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, even if the latter's earthly clay came last, for he was pre-existent in his reality {ḥaqīqah} and that is the meaning of his saying: “I was a prophet while Adam was...” while the other prophets were prophets only at the time they were sent in the flesh.”<sup>8</sup>

Which would bring us back to his saying, “I am the first Prophet to be created and the last one to be sent.”<sup>9</sup> Just as the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, assured us that on the Day of Resurrection he will be “the first one for whose rising the earth would cleave.”<sup>10</sup> On that day of Resurrection, “I shall be the ʿImām of the prophets, the one who speaks for them and the one who shall intercede {shifāʾ} for them.”<sup>11</sup>

So it is that at either side of time we find his spirit {rūḥu} and his blessed presence {baraktu-l-ḥadratuḥu}, ʿalla-llāhu ʿalayhi wa salim.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted by Suyuti in al-Hawī lil-Fatawī, Beirut (1975) 2:100-101.

<sup>8</sup>Fusus al-hikam 1:63-64.

<sup>9</sup>Aḥmad and Ḥakīm. Saḥāwī declared it saḥīḥ (authentic) in the “Maqasid” 1:327.

<sup>10</sup>Muslim

<sup>11</sup>Tirmidhī

For surely there is that Day when the resurrected shall all stand forth, {yōwma-l-qiyāmati} {22:17 23:16}, and that poses no difficulty for Allāh.

﴿وَيَقُولُ الْإِنْسَنُ أَءِذَا مَاتَ لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا  
أَوْ لَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَنُ أَنَا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئًا﴾

WA YAQŪLU-L-ʾINSĀNU ʾAʾIDĥĀ MĀ MITTU LASAWFA ʾUKĥRAJU HAYYĀ?  
ʾAWALĀ YADĥKURU-L-ʾINSĀNU  
ʾANNA KĥALAQĥNĀHU MIN QABĀLU WA LAM YAKU ShAYʿĀ?

And the human says, “When I am dead shall I be brought forth alive?”  
Does not the human remember that We created him from before  
when he was no thing?  
{19:66-67}

How do we remember that Allāh created us from before? In what space must we be, to remember the *before* when we existed in an other form; a form often referred to by those with knowledge of the heart {‘ilmu-l-qulūb} as the Column of Light {‘amūdu-n-nūr} in the subtle sub-atomic form of sonorous luminous particles spinning in a most intricate matrix woven of sound and light; particles {ḍĥarr}; the totality of all souls that would ever be. And as they spun the *ḥamd* that sound, that light, that radiance was Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, in his worship of Allāh before time was, when “*he saw Him yet another time*”, and seeing what he saw, and “*about which his heart did not lie*” he entered into the station of eternal praise in which form he worshipped Allāh for aeons, that he who was, and is, we, all of us who remember our pre-existential being.

This is, as is completely obvious from the sound of the word, the *ḥamd* — that pre-eternal paeon of praise which gives rise to the ten thousand things that emanate from the mysterious womb {raḥim} out of which come the myriad objects. It is that *ḥamd* that is the key to understanding at the most essential level the character of *mu*—the one who—*ḥammad* makes the *ḥamd* — the Praiser of Allāh. And it is in precisely that praise or worship that our beginnings, beings and ultimate destiny is to be found.

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾

WA MĀ KĥALAQTU-L-JINNA WA-L-ʾINSA ʾILLĀ LI-YAʿBUDŪN •

I have not created the Jinn or People except that they worship Me  
{51:56}



From that vantage point if you look closely you will see that what are called the intergalactic winds are, in reality, the wings of angels still in their original and profound rukū‘ which they took the moment after when the dhāt, having introspected itself and seen the hidden potentialities {shūyūnat} and their attributes {ṣifāt} first dawned in the transparent form of light {an-nūr}, and it might be said that some “thing” was, though even that Light is a veil over Glory be to Allah who is highly exalted and above everything.

If the question were to be asked, “are the sonorous particles some thing?” we could only say, that rather than ‘thing’ they are, in the way sound and light are. Light is not some thing but rather it is the ‘medium’ by which things can be seen just as ‘sound’ is the medium through which things may be heard. Both sound and light are invisible, or transparent, as such and as such we may call this light and sound ‘spiritual’ for the spirit {ar-rūḥ} can neither, strictly speaking, be seen or heard though it can be experienced. {Q97}

From that perspective consider the meaning of the words transmitted on the authority of Dhakwan, may Allāh find contentment with him, that “The Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, did not cast a shadow whether in sunlight or moonlight.”<sup>12</sup> What is it other than light that casts no shadow? “I am from the light of Allāh and the whole world is from my light.” {anā min nūrullāhi wa kḥalaq kulluhum min nūrī}

And what is it other than sound, pure sound itself, that is ultimately unlettered {ʿummi} vibrational ecstasy, Ṭā Hā, Yā Sīīn, Ḥā Mīīm, as was his own most blessed self, benedictions and peace be upon him, when touched by the celestial currents, the curling wave that we call, for lack of better words, the voice of an angel, peace be upon him.

As our Shaykh ‘Abdu-s-Salām ibn Maṣhish, may Allāh sanctify his secret and perfume his resting place, beseeched,

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰی مَنْ مِنْهُ اَنْشَقَّتْ الْاَسْرَارُ  
وَ اَنْفَلَقَتْ الْاَنْوَارُ

ALLĀHUMMA ṢALLĪ ‘ALĀ MAM-MINHU ‘IN-ShAQQATI-L-’ASRĀR  
WA-N-FALAQATI-L-’ANWĀR

Oh Allāh, blessings upon the one from whom are split open the secrets  
and stream forth the lights

<sup>12</sup>Tirmidhī

# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
 مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ  
 الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ  
 الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ  
 يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ  
 يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ  
 نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ  
 يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ  
 وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

ALLĀHU NŪRU-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA-L'ARD •  
 MATĤĀLU NŪRIHĪ KAMISHĤĀTIN FĪHĀ MIŞBĀĤ •  
 AL-MIŞBĀHU FĪ ZUJĀJAH •  
 AL-ZUJĀJATU KA'ANNAHĀ KAWKABUN DURRĪ •  
 YŪQADU MIN ŞĤAJARATIM-M-MUBĀRAKATIN ZAYTŪNATIL •  
 -LĀ ŞĤARQIYYATIŤW-WA LĀ GHĀRBĪYYAH •  
 YAKĀDU ZAYTUHĀ YUḌĪPU WA LŌW LAM TAMSASHU NĀR •  
 NŪRUN 'ALĀ NŪR •  
 YAHDĪ-LLĀHU LI-NŪRIHĪ MAŤNY-YASHĤĀĀ •  
 WA YAḌRIBU-LLĀHU-L'AMTĤĀLA LI-N-NĀS •  
 WA-LLĀHU BI-KULLI ŞĤAYIN 'ALĪM •

Allāh is the Light of Heaven and Earth.  
 An example of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp,  
 — the lamp in a glass —  
 — the glass like unto a glittering star —  
 kindled from a blessed tree — an olive — neither from the East nor from the West  
 — whose oil shines though no fire touch it —  
 light upon light  
 Allāh guides to His Light whom He chooses  
 and Allāh strikes images for the people and Allāh has knowledge of every thing  
 {24:35}

When looked at from this perspective, it is clear that in seeking to know our Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, it is necessary that we know the details not only of his worldly being but also of his pre-eternal being if we are to be counted among his true inheritors {wārith}.

The ḥadīth al-qudsī, “nothing contains Me but the heart of the believer”<sup>13</sup> is easier to understand when you know that, “the picture of the Friend is set in the mirror of the heart; whenever you bend your neck you see Him there.”

From this perspective<sup>14</sup> the niche may be likened {maṭḥala} to each of our beings, the lamp {miṣbah} to our heart, the clear glass globe to Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, and the light shining forth from the point of emanation, the glittering star {kōwkub durriy}, which was seen when he saw and “his heart lied not in what he saw.”{53:11}

It is a light kindled inwardly from our ‘own’ beings, we who are leaves on the tree of life {o’live}, coming neither from East nor from West, “for We have appointed you to be a people of the heart {waṣata}”<sup>15</sup> {2:143} who, when embraced deeply by our Lord, give forth the oil which shines though no fire touches it, internally self illuminated and outwardly unseen light.

﴿ وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴾

WA FĪ ʾANFUSIKUM ʾAFALĀ TUBŠIRŪN?

And within you selves. Do you not see?  
{51:21}

The internal {bāṭin} light that finds its accord with the manifest {dḥāhir} light so that it is “light upon light” {nūrun ‘alā nūr}, for surely Allāh guides to His light whom He chooses {many-yashāa’}. This lead our Shaykh, may Allāh sanctify his secret, to say, “Of all the Ways there are two: the way of travelling {sulūk} and the way of attraction {jadḥb}. Our Way is the Way of Jadḥb. Our beginning is their end. Their beginning is our completion.” Shaykh Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh writes in *Kitāb al-Hikām*, “He who is illumined in the beginning is illumined at the end.” So it is that our under-standing is firmly based on the reality {ḥaqīqah} that Enlightenment or Illumination {ishrāq} is both in our beginning and at our end, with the certain knowledge that both our beginning and end are in His Presence and by His Choice.”

<sup>13</sup>Ḥadīth Qudsi

<sup>14</sup>with full knowledge of the many illustrious ones who have opened so many levels of meaning from these Words of Allāh with this view being one of the views and not the only view.

<sup>15</sup>wasat = middle, center, heart;

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh, to whom we are so indebted for our knowledge of the Way of our Ṣhaykh, made abundantly clear that the Way of Arrival to the knowledge {*al-ma‘rifah*} of Allāh by insight, direct witnessing, and tasting at the beginning was the way of the elite who are the chosen of Allāh whilst the Way of Arrival to Allāh by intellection, reason and proofs was the way of the commonalty who have chosen Allāh. He indicates that arrival to the knowledge of Allāh is not attained by struggle {*jihād*} with the self {*nafs*}, neither by obedience nor good deeds, for these are the product of human will {*irādah*} and the self-surrendered have no will in relation to the Will of Allāh. We cannot reach Allāh by our will alone, nor by renouncing our selves, humiliating our selves, or destroying our selves, for “there is no logical *nexus* between the transcendent and the contingent.” Our arrival to the knowledge {*ma‘arifah*} of Allāh stems from the providential solicitude of Allāh {*‘ināyatu-llāh*}. Real and ineffable sanctifying grace in conjunction with amorous wisdom. The ‘spiritual life’ is not so much a question of choice as it is a matter of vocation and an abiding sense of having been chosen as witnesses in eternity on the day of “*Alastu bi-rabbikum?*”

Thus we may say in understanding our original Muḥammadan being that when Allāh formed Muḥammad the Praiser, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, from His Light, our own sentience began; a sentience, both limitless, in its ecstatic amorous experience of Allāh and limited, in that we knew nothing other than praise {*ḥamd*} of Allāh. Our being took the form of sub-atomic particles; individuated motes {*adh-dḥarrah*} of light forming the spiritual body of the Praiser known as the Column of Light {*‘amūdu-n-nūr*}.

At this ‘time’, as we have seen, Adam, peace be upon him, was still between clay and water {*bayna ṭīn wa mā‘*}, between spirit and flesh {*bayna rūḥi wa-l-jasad*}; not yet was “his spirit {*rūḥi*} joined to his body”.

When we remember {*dḥakara*} that our “*Lord brought forth {‘akḥadḥa} from the Children of Adam, from their backbones, their spinal column {dḥūrihim}*<sup>16</sup>, *from their seed {dḥuriyyatahum} and made them to bear witness of themselves {anfusihi}*” “Am I not your Lord?” {*‘alastu bi-rabbikum?*} *they said, “Without doubt! We see {bala ṣḥahidnā}.”* What sees or witnesses but the particles {*adh-dḥarrah*} drawn from our vertebrae {*adh-dḥar*}, from our seed, {*adh-dḥuri*} which are naught but the self-same sub-atomic motes {*adh-dḥarrah*} of conscious light that form the body of the Praiser known as the Column of Light {*‘amūdu-n-nūr*}. Who is a witness to our Lord other than the Muḥammad of our being?

<sup>16</sup>*dḥahara*=to be made visible, perceptible, distinct, manifest as well as *dḥahr*=loins

These sub-atomic seeds {ḍarrah} may be pictured in the realm of analogy as being similar to the red or white corpuscles constantly circulating within the human body, if consciousness were an attribute of blood cells, for each of these *seeds* or *motes* contains the deep conscious “memory” of their pre-eternal corporate state of existence within the *ḥamd* of the Primordial Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. As such the ḍarrah existed in the state of timelessness and without any spatial reference.

When, in accord with the Order of Allāh, they came between the *kāf* and the *nūn* the seeds were precipitated out of their perfectly balanced {takāmuli} and integrated timeless and spaceless state in the realm of potentiality {shuyūnat} from whence each descended {nazala} as a particularised entity {a‘yān} possessed of both attribute {ṣifāt} and name {‘ism} until finally they precipitated into the world of form; the world of clay and water in which each timeless seed manifested as temporal seed {ḍhurriyyah}, the progeny of Adam, peace be upon him, which is to say: us— an-nasūt.

The innate consciousness of the seed, which a modern commentator<sup>17</sup> characterises as: “The ability to perceive the existence of the Supreme Power {which} is inborn in human nature {fitrah}; {the} instinctive cognition” is in the form of two precious memories stored within the seed; the memory of a place before time when we existed in the *ḥamd* of Muḥammad, Allāh bless him and grant him peace, and the memory of our individuated beginning in time when Allāh drew us, all that were and would be, and made us aware of our origin and our destiny.

وَ إِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ  
وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا  
أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

WA ‘IDh ‘AKhADhA RABBUKA MIM BANII ‘ADAMA  
MIN DhUHURIHIM DhURRIYYATAHUM

WA ‘ASHhADAHUM ‘ALĀ ‘ANFUSIHIM ‘ALASTU BI-RABBIKUM  
QĀLŪ BALĀ ShAHIDNĀĀ

‘AN TAQŪLŪ YŌWMA-L-QIYĀMATI ‘INNĀ KUNNĀ ‘AN HADhĀ GhĀFILĪN

And when your Lord took from the Children of Adam from their spines their seed  
and made them bear witness about themselves,

“Am I not your Lord?” they said, “Without doubt, We see it!”

{This} Lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, “Oh! We didn’t know.”

{7:172}

<sup>17</sup>Muhamamad ‘Assad, footnote 139 to {Q7:172} in *The Message of the Qur’ān*, Dar al-Andalus

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ  
أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً﴾

YĀĀ'AYYATUHĀ-N-NAFSU-L-MUṬĀMA'INAH  
'IRJĪ'ĪLĀ RABBIKA RĀDIYATAM-MARDIYYAH

Oh you whose self is at rest  
return to your Lord pleased and well pleasing  
{89:27-28}

﴿إِنِّ إِلَٰهِي رَبُّكَ الرَّجْعِيَّ﴾

'INNA 'ILĀ RABBIKA RUJĀ'Ā

Surely you shall return to your Lord  
{96:8}

﴿فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ﴾

FADḥKURŪNĪ'ADḥKURKUM WA-ShḥKURŪ LĪ WA LĀ TAKFURŪN

So Remember Me and I shall Remember you and thank Me  
and do not cover up {the Truth}  
{2:152}

﴿وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ؕ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ﴾

WA LA-DḥIKRU-LLĀHI'AKBAR • WA-LLĀHU YA'LAMU MĀ TAṢNA'ŪN

and the Remembrance of Allāh is greater and Allāh knows what you do  
{29:45}

﴿الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَ تَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ  
أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ﴾

'ALLADḥĪNA 'ĀMANŪ WA TAṬĀMA'INNU QULŪBUHUM BI-DḥIKRI-LLĀH  
'ALĀ BI-DḥIKRI-LLĀHI TAṬĀMA'INNU-L-QULŪB

those who believe and who set their hearts at rest by the Remembrance of Allāh  
surely by the Remembrance of Allāh do hearts find rest.  
{13:28}

If Remembrance of our beginning, of our heritage, and of our destiny eludes us, we are like those of whom Allāh says, “*Deaf, dumb and blind they do not return*” {2:18}, “*deaf, dumb and blind, they will not understand.*” {2:171} for “*whoever is blind in this world shall be blind in the next*” {17:72} for surely Allāh is Just {al-ʿadl} and surely He said,

﴿أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَفْلِينَ﴾

ʾAN TAQŪLŪ YŌWMA-L-QIYĀMATI ʾINNĀ KUNNĀ ʾAN HADḥĀ GHĀFILĪN

{This} lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, “Oh! We didn’t know.”  
{7:172}

From this we deduce that the Remembrance of Allāh {dhikru-llāh} is among the primary Manifestations of that Shadowless Presence, that Spiritual Ḥaḍrah of the Primordial Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him for surely when we remember Him, we must also remember him.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ

LĀĀ ʾILĀHA ʾILLA-LLAHU MUḤAMMADUR-RASŪLU-LLĀH

There is no deity save Allāh Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh

Some say that since he, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, was *raḥmatan-li-l-ʿalamin* {22:107}, a mercy to all the worlds, mercy and compassion should be considered as the first of his manifestations, his teachings of us, his fostering {tarbiyyah} of our beings.

Surely the certain knowledge {ʿilma-l-yaqīn} that comes from the direct eye witnessing {shahadah} is nothing less than mercy {raḥmah}, for without that clear and certain knowledge of our true origin and certain destiny we should be among those on the other side of the gate, of whom Allāh says,

فَضْرِبَ بَيْنَهُم بِسُورٍ لَهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ  
وَظَاهَرُهُ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الْعَذَابُ

FADURIBA BAYNAHUM BI-SŪRIN-L-LAHU BABUM BĀṬINUHU  
FĪHI-R-RAḤMATU WA DHĀHIRUHU MIN QIBALIHI-L-ʿADḥĀB

A wall shall separate them wherein is a gate,  
the inner side of which is mercy and the outer of which is torment.  
{57:13p}

We can gain some idea of the value placed on this Remembrance of Allāh by noting that Allāh specifically recommends “Dhikru-llāh” in more than fifty places in the Qur’ān, and specifically notes that

﴿وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي  
فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى﴾

WA MAN ‘A‘RADA ‘AN DḥIKRĪ  
FA‘INNA LAHŪ MA‘ISHATAN DANKAŅ  
WA NAḤṢḥURUHŪ YŌWMA-L-QIYĀMATI ‘A‘MĀ

And whoever turns away from My Remembrance  
his shall be a narrow life  
and We shall raise him blind on the Day of Resurrection.  
{20:124}

asking us

﴿أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ  
فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِّن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾

‘AFAMAN ṢḥARAḤA-LLĀHU ṢADRAHŪ LI-L-‘ISLĀMĪ  
FAHUWA ‘ALĀ NŪRIM-MIR-RABBIḤ?  
FAWAYLUL-LI-L-QĀSIYATI QULŪBUHUM-MIN DḥIKRI-LLĀH  
‘ULĀĀ‘IKA FĪ ḐALĀLIM-MUBĪN

Is the one whose heart is opened to self surrender  
so that he is illumined by light from his Lord  
{like the blind and deaf of heart}?  
Woe unto them whose hearts are hardened against the Remembrance of Allāh  
surely they are in clear error.  
{39:22}

Here we must also note that when we speak of the Remembrance of Allāh we are not only referring to the formula of tahlil<sup>18</sup> and darūd ṣḥarīf<sup>19</sup>

﴿لَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ﴾

LAQADĀ ‘ANZALNĀĀ ‘ILAYKUM KITĀBAN FĪHĪ DḥIKRUKUM  
And We have sent down upon you the Book wherein is your Remembrance  
{21:10}

<sup>18</sup>jāā ‘ilāha ‘illa-llāh

<sup>19</sup>muḥammadur-rasūlu-llāh



For the whole of Qurʾān, which is often called the greatest miracle of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, is also dhikr, and the importance of it to our lives can only be guessed at by recalling that the first Command of Allāh to the Prophet in this world was to “Read” or “Recite”.

﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ﴾

ʾIQārʾA BI-S-MI RABBIKA-L-LADhī KḥALAQā

Read in the Name of your Lord who created  
{96:1}

Consider the words of Allāh on the tongue of the Prophet<sup>20</sup>, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him,

“I treat my worshipper as he expects from Me.

When he Remembers Me, I am with him.

Thus if he Remembers Me in his heart I Remember him in My Heart

If he Remembers me in a gathering I Remember him at a better gathering

— the gathering of My angels —

If my worshipper draws near to Me by the length of a finger,

I draw near to him by the length of a hand.

If he draws closer to me by one hand I draw closer to him by two hands.

If he comes to Me walking I come to him running.”

Abū Hurayrah and Abū Sayyid, may Allāh find contentment with them both, narrated that they heard the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, say: “People do not gather for the Remembrance of Allāh {dhikru-llāh} other than that group is surrounded by angels and engulfed in the blessings of Allāh. And on this gathering the holy sakinah is sent down and Allāh remembers them {dhakrahum} among those with Him.”

ʾAnās, may Allāh find contentment with him, said that the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, “Whoever gathers solely for the Remembrance of Allāh, then an Angel calls out that these people have been forgiven and their evils are converted to virtues.”

Abū Ḍarr, may Allāh find contentment with him, says that the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said in this context that, “Whoever recites the Qurʾān and remembers Allāh will be remembered in the heavens and cause light to descend on the earth.”

<sup>20</sup>Ḥadīth Qudsī

It is clear that the remembrance of Allāh and the recitation of Qurʾān are inextricably linked and in turn are linked with the ṣalāh<sup>21</sup> which can neither be contemplated nor completed without the recital of Qurʾān and the remembrance of Allāh.

It is these three<sup>22</sup> specific manifestations of the invisible and shadowless presence that I will now touch upon as primary examples of the tarbiyah of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

If it is not yet clear what precisely I mean by “the shadowless presence” I would only say that our essential understanding is that the Prophet is not only someone who lived some 1400 years ago in a semi-obscure town on the edges of the great Arabian desert, but rather the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, is someone who is also quite alive and present in the present. That, I repeat, is not in any way to deny the historico-collective personality of the Prophet, blessings of Allah and peace be upon him, but it is to include the transconscious and transmuted spiritual reality of his being, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, which we have sought to clarify.

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتَ  
بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

WA LĀ TAQŪLŪ LI-MAŶY-YUQĀTALU FĪ SABILI-LLĀHI ʾAMWĀT  
BAL ʾAĤYĀĀʾ UNW-WA LĀKINĻ-LĀ TAŞʿURŪN

Do not say that those who have died in the Way of Allāh are dead  
Without doubt they are living but you do not know how  
{2:154}

When we act, and there is no belief without action {la ʾimān bidun ʿamal}, and by dint of our conscious action enter into the dhikr of Allāh, recite the Qurʾān, or perform the Ṣalāh, we, in a subtle and unseen way, re-animate, re-vivify and restore in our selves as well as in this world the spiritual presence {ḥadrah} of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, for all of these actions are part of the precious wirāthah that form the tarbiyah of the Prophet, blessings of Allah and peace be upon him.

<sup>21</sup> often translated as prayer, but in this essay left untranslated, as the word “prayer” is too limited a term to apply to the Ṣalāh which includes prayer but is not limited to prayer.

<sup>22</sup> I was set a limit by the organisers of the conference otherwise I should have liked to open up some of the other examples of the manifestation, such as the fasting {ṣawm}, the purification of one’s wealth {zakkah}, the pilgrimage to the Holy House {al-hajj}, the struggle {jihād} against all forms of oppression and disbelief and the countless other dimensions bequeathed to us by our Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

Each time that we consciously act within the forms both bequeathed to us and prescribed for us we come into contact with him for he is the initiator in space and time, of all the forms. When we remember Allāh he remembers Allāh in and with us, when we read Qurʾān he reads Qurʾān in and with us, when we pass through the movements of the Ṣalāh he moves in and with us. In short all of the forms are ways of entering into communion and communication with the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

This has an immense benefit to the practitioner in making the actions prescribed {al-farūd} by Allāh come alive. So often, as any one who is honest will readily admit, the dhikr, the recital, the ṣalāh become as it were, dead. It is not, of course, they that are dead, ʾistaghfiru-llāh, but it is we who are dead which is to say absent or oblivious {ghāflah}. Our problem, both short term and over the long term, is how to bring our practice to life.

We cannot abandon our ṣalāh and, since the ṣalāh contains both the dhikr of Allāh and the recital of the Qurʾān, we cannot abandon them either. Shall our choice be to settle into a kind of dull mechanical life of ritual? A life which is heavy, dry and hard and which, all too often, if only for the sake of survival, leads people to seek outward means of bolstering faith in the form of a passionate ideological ʾIslām far removed from the Message brought by *ar-rahmatan-li-l-ʿalamīn*, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

And even if we are not drawn to the sink of ideology we may find ourselves, because we know better, attracted to outer visible forms of spirituality. Thus we grow our beards, don our turbans, pick up our walking sticks, use the miswak, sit on the floor, eat with our fingers, all out of a sincere desire to emulate our Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, but all in vain because the inner Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, the trans-conscious and transmuted Muḥammad, is still asleep.

This is not to deny the forms of the outer sunnah any more than it is to deny the outward physical form of the Messenger, blessings of Allāh peace be upon him, but simply to say that if these forms are not animated from within they are travesties of truth and open doors to hypocrisy {nifāq}.

When, however, we begin to realise the truth of the hidden presence of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon, within our very beings our actions take on another form of life. This way of acting, of being, leads to the form of annihilation or self-effacement called fanā fī-rasūl.

It is this self-effacement in the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon, that is the result of following his tarbiyah.

Let me share with you a few of the sayings about just these three forms bequeathed to us by the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him.

“Abu Huraryrah, may Allāh find contentment with him, said that the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him said, “He who remembers Allah and he who does not are like the living and the dead.”<sup>23</sup>

Abū Dardāʿ, may Allāh be content with him, said, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him said “Would you like me to tell you the best and purest of your deeds in the estimation of your King? Those which raise you to the highest degree; those which are better for you than spending gold and silver; those that are better for you than meeting the enemy and cutting off their head?” On receiving a reply in the affirmative he said, “It is remembering Allāh.”<sup>24</sup>

Abu Hurarayrah, may Allāh find contentment with him, reported that the Messenger of Allāh, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, “If anyone sits someplace where he does not Remember Allāh then deprivation will descend upon him and if anyone lies down in a place where he does not remember Allāh then vengeance will descend upon him from Allāh.”<sup>25</sup>

Ibn ‘Umar, may Allāh find contentment with him, reported that the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Do not speak much without mentioning Allāh for much talk without the mention of Allāh produces hardness of the heart and the one who is farthest away from Allāh is the one whose heart is hard.”<sup>26</sup>

‘Abdu-llāh bin Busr, may Allāh find contentment with him, told the story of a man who said, “O Messenger of Allāh. The prescriptions of ‘Islām are too many for me so tell me something to which I may cling’, ‘He, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, replied, ‘Your tongue will be made supple by remembering Allāh.’”<sup>27</sup>

Mālik, may Allāh find contentment with him, said that he heard the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, say, “The one who remembers Allāh among those who are negligent is like one who goes on fighting after the others have fled; the one who remembers Allāh among the negligent is like a green tree amongst withered trees; the one who remembers Allāh among the negligent is like a lamp in a dark house; the one who

<sup>23</sup>Bukhārī and Muslim transmitted it

<sup>24</sup>Mālik, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah transmitted it

<sup>25</sup>Abū Dawūd transmitted it

<sup>26</sup>Tirmidhī transmitted it

<sup>27</sup>Ibn Mājah transmitted it

remembers Allāh among the negligent will be shown in their life time their resting place in Paradise by Allāh; the one who makes mention of Allāh among those who are negligent will be forgiven sins as many as the number of those who are eloquent {faṣīḥ} and those who lack {aṣjam} eloquence.”<sup>28</sup>

‘Abdu-llāh ibn ‘Umār, may Allāh find contentment with him, said that he heard the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, say, “Everything has a polish and the polish for hearts is the Remembrance of Allāh. Nothing is more calculated to rescue one from the punishment of Allāh than the Remembrance of Allāh.” He was asked whether this did not also apply to Jihād {struggle or combat} in the Way of Allāh {fī sabīli-llāh} and he said, “Not even if one should ply his sword till it is broken.”<sup>29</sup>

Abū Hurayrah, may Allāh find contentment with him, said that he heard Allāh say on the tongue<sup>30</sup> of the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, “I am with my servant when he remembers Me and his lips move making mention of Me.”

Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī, may Allāh find contentment with him, reported that the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “A believer who recites Qur’ān is like a citron whose fragrance is sweet and whose taste is sweet. A believer who does not recite the Qur’ān is like a date which still has a sweet taste but which has no sweet scent {tayyib}. A hypocrite who does not recite the Qur’ān is like the fruit which has no scent and has a bitter taste. The hypocrite who recites the Qur’ān is like basil which has a sweet fragrance but whose taste is bitter.”<sup>31</sup>

Abū Umāma, may Allāh find contentment with him, said that he heard the Messenger of Allāh say, “Recite the Qur’ān, for on the Day of Resurrection it will come as an intercessor for those who recite it...”<sup>32</sup>

Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allāh find contentment with him, said that the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, “The one who has nothing of the Qur’ān within is like a ruined house.”<sup>33</sup>

Mu‘adhī al-Juhānī, may Allāh find contentment with him, said that the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, “If anyone recites the Qur’ān and acts according to what it contains, on the Day of

<sup>28</sup>Razīn transmitted it

<sup>29</sup>Baihaqī transmitted it

<sup>30</sup>ḥadīth qudsī transmitted by Bukhārī

<sup>31</sup>Bukhārī and Muslim reported it

<sup>32</sup>Muslim recited it

<sup>33</sup>Tirmidhī and Dārimī transmitted it.

Resurrection he will find that his parents have been given a crown whose light is better than the light of the sun in the dwellings of this world if it were among you. So what do you think of the one who acts according to this?"<sup>34</sup>

Ibn ʿUmār, may Allāh find contentment with him, reported that the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, "Hearts become rusty just as iron does when water gets to it." On being asked what would remove the rust he replied, "A lot of remembrance of death and the recitation of Qurʾān."<sup>35</sup>

Abū Hurayrah, may Allāh find contentment with him, reported that the Messenger of Allāh said, "Learn and recite the Qurʾān, for to one who learns, recites and uses it in prayer at night it is like a bag filled with musk whose fragrance diffuses itself everywhere; and who learns it and goes to sleep having it within him is like a bag with musk tied up inside of it."<sup>36</sup>

ʿUmārah bin Ruwaybah said, may Allāh find contentment with him, that he heard the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, say, "No one will enter the Fire who has prayed before the rising of the sun and before its setting<sup>37</sup>" {meaning Ṣalātu-l-ʿAṣr}.<sup>38</sup>

Abū Mūsā, may Allāh find contentment with him, reported that the Messenger of Allāh, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, "The one who observes the two cool times of ṣalāh<sup>39</sup> will enter the Garden."<sup>40</sup>

Abū Hurayrah, may Allāh find contentment with him, reported that the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, said, "Angels take turns among you by night and by day and they all assemble at the dawn and afternoon ṣalāh. Those who spent the night among you then ascend and their Lord asks them, and He is the best informed about them, "How did you leave my servants?" and they reply, "We left them while they were praying and we came to them while they were praying."<sup>41</sup>

Abū Hurayrah, may Allāh find contentment with him, reported that the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him said, "No ṣalāh is more burdensome to the hypocrites that the dawn and evening ṣalāh; but if

<sup>34</sup> Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd transmitted it

<sup>35</sup> Baihaqī transmitted it

<sup>36</sup> Tirmidhī, Nasāʾī and Ibn Mājah transmitted it

<sup>37</sup> Muslim transmitted it

<sup>38</sup> afternoon meaning al-ʿaṣr

<sup>39</sup> at dawn and after nightfall

<sup>40</sup> Bukhārī and Muslim transmitted it

<sup>41</sup> Bukhārī and Muslim transmitted it

they knew what blessings lie in them they would come even if they had to come crawling.”<sup>42</sup>

Abū Hurayrah, may Allāh find contentment with him, reported that the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him said concerning the Words of Allāh {the meaning}, “Truly, {The recital of} Qur’ān at dawn is always witnessed” means that the angels of the night and the angels of the day are present in it.”<sup>43</sup>

Abū Hurayrah, may Allāh find contentment with him, reported that the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him said, “If anyone observes the ṣalāh and does not recite the ‘Ummu-l-Qur’ān<sup>44</sup> it is incomplete {and he repeated this three times}.” When someone then asked Abu Hurayrah, may Allāh find contentment with him, {what he should do} if he were led by an ‘imām, he told him to recite it inwardly, for he had heard the Messenger of Allāh, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, say that Allāh had declared, “I have divided the recital into two halves between me and My Worshipper {‘abdī} and my worshippers will receive what they ask.” When the worshipper says, “Praise be to Allāh, Lord of All the Worlds,” Allāh most High says, “My worshipper has praised me.” When he says, “The Compassionate, the Merciful.” Allāh most High says, “My worshipper has lauded me.” When he says, “Master of the Day of Judgment,” He says, “My worshipper has glorified me.” When he says, “You do we worship and of You do we seek help.” He says, “This is between me and my worshipper and he shall receive what he asks.” When he says, “Guide us on the Straight Path, The Path of those to whom You are generous and not of those with whom You are angry nor of those who are astray.” He says, “This is for my worshipper and my worshipper will receive what he asks.”<sup>45</sup>

Jābir said, may Allāh find contentment with him, “The Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him used to teach us the Witnessing {taṣḥahhud} just as he would teach us a sūrah from the Qur’ān, saying, ‘In the Name of Allāh and with His Blessings. The adorations of the tongue, the acts of worship are all due to Allāh. Peace be upon you, oh Prophet, and the Mercy and Blessings of Allāh. Peace be upon us and the sound worshippers of Allāh. I testify that there is no deity but Allāh and that Muḥammad is His Worshipper and Messenger...’”<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Muslim transmitted it

<sup>43</sup>Tirmidhī transmitted it

<sup>44</sup>al-Fātiḥah {the first sūrah}

<sup>45</sup>Muslim transmitted it

<sup>46</sup>Nasāʾī transmitted it

Allāh ordered him to say,

﴿ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ ﴾

ʾINNAMĀĀ ʾANA BASḥARUN MITHḥLUKUM

“I am a human being like you”  
{18:110}

and the Muslims over time say, “Yes, like a diamond is a stone.”

Outwardly he was like us and so can be understood and known in his historico-collective form, but inwardly he was transformed and transmuted, returned to his original nature which is the ʾinsan kāmīl, the universal human, and the mirror in which Allāh contemplated His universal existence in a time before time “when Adam had not yet had his spirit joined to his body.”<sup>50</sup> and was still between spirit and flesh.

So blessings, salutations and peace be upon the First and the Best in creation in this the month of his blessed birth, and upon his Family and Companions through the end of time. May we share in his shadowless presence manifest in that which he left us as an inheritance and the means of our way to the realm of transconscious and transmuted spirituality.

Everywhere he is present, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. We thank Allāh for giving us the ‘eyes’ by which to see him, the ‘ears’ by which to hear him and the ‘body’ in which we seek to emulate him.



من الفقير إلى ربه والغنى دائماً بفضلِهِ ونعمه

ن

by one who is poor before his Lord and endlessly enriched by His Bounty

ʿAbdullāh Noorudeen Durkee

17 Rabʿa-l-ʾAwwal 1416 Hijri — 14 August 1995 Miladi

Green Mountain, Virginia

<sup>50</sup>at-Tirmiddhī



From these few out of the many available ḥadīth on these subjects we have no trouble in seeing the interconnected nature of the Remembrance of Allāh the Recital of the Qurʾān and the Observation of the Ṣalāh. All we have said is known and well known. The form, the movements, the words are known by both the people of the dḥāhir but also of the bāṭin and each understand it according to their taste and yet it contains all that anyone seeks.

If you observe a line of people in ṣalāh, as far as outward appearances go, it is all the same. Each worshipper is faithfully carrying out the Order of Allāh revealed through the Prophet, first orally, and later in the form of a written script. The prince and the pauper, the baker and the beggar, the king and the sweeper<sup>47</sup> all stand, bow, prostrate, kneel and sit together and only Allāh can fathom their true state and station.

For one worshipper the ṣalāh is a matter of the thirteen obligatory movements in each cycle {rakʿah}, that the seven points of the body touch the earth in prostration, that the six items of the taṣṭahhud are scrupulously observed.

For another worshipper the ṣalāh is not so much a matter of form, though the form is always carefully preserved, but rather it is a matter of a means of reaching a state of proximity, a way of drawing closer to the Real. From this perspective sajdah {prostration} is not only a matter of the forehead, both hands, both knees and the toes of both feet touching the earth in the prescribed manner. It is that, when one prostrates, that the heart is at the same time humble and submissive, the saying of “*samiʿa-llāhu liman ḥamidah*” {Allāh hears those who praise Him} is not a string of words that are read by rote but rather it is a matter that the heart be filled with praise at the moment one enunciates the phrase. From this perspective, the concern simply with form is seen rather in the light of someone offering paper flowers or painted cakes to the Lord. Though they may appear the same, paper flowers have no true life and painted cakes do not satisfy hunger.

For yet another worshipper it is the witnessing {mushāhadah} of the Truth. It is the contemplation of Allāh in accord with the words of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, “I saw my Lord with the eye of my Lord and I knew my Lord by my Lord.”<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup>At least in the ideal. From the time after, ‘Imām ‘Alī, may Allāh cherish his presence, few leaders would stand shoulder to shoulder with the generality {al-khaṣṣ} with perhaps a few exceptions. Given the means by which the lives of the last of the righteous khulifāh, ‘Umār, Uthmān and ‘Alī, Allāh have mercy on them all, gave their lives, some might say this was wise.

<sup>48</sup>transmitted by

This is in accord with what was related in the very well known ḥadīth in which the angel Jibrīl, peace be upon him, came to the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, in the form of a man with jet black hair and immaculate white garments and questioned him, whilst he was in the midst of his companions, about the meaning of ʾislām, ʾimān and ʾihsān. Of the last he said it is, “To worship Allāh as though you saw him, knowing if you do not see Him yet He sees you.”<sup>49</sup>

﴿قُلْ ءَامِنُوا بِهِ اَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوْا اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوْا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ اِذَا يَتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ يَخِرُوْنَ لِّلْاَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا﴾

QUL ʾĀMANŪBIHĪ ʾŌW LĀ TUʾMINŪ ʾINNA-L-LADḥĪNA ʾŪTŪ-L-ʿILMA MIN QABĀLIHĪ ʾIDḥA YUTLĀ ʿALAYHIM YAKḥIRRŪNA LI-ʾADḥQĀNI SUJJADA

Say, “Believe it or don’t believe it.

Those who are already endowed with knowledge fall down upon their faces when it is revealed to them.”

{17:107}

Sahl aṭ-Ṭustarī, may Allāh sanctify his secret, says in his tafsīr of this verse, “When the worshipper *hears*, then his inner self becomes submissive and his inner self {sirr} becomes humble. His heart is illuminated and his limbs and organs become submissive {tadḥllul} and they are constrained. Allāh has created in each being an outer self {ḍḥāhir} and its ‘life’ is praise {ḥamd} and an inner self {sirr} and its life is remembrance {ḍḥikr}.”

In this context it should be remembered that whilst the Prophet Nūḥ, peace be upon him, called his people “by night and by day” {71:5} Sayyidinā Muḥammad, Allāh bless him and grant his peace, knew by Revelation {waḥy} that Allāh “makes the day to enter the night” {3:27} by “wrapping the day about the night” {39:5} and thus “makes the night to enter into the day” {35:13}. Thus he, peace and blessings be upon him, called the people by day {aḍḥ-ḍḥāhir} to the night {al-bāṭin} and by the night {al-bāṭin} to the day {aḍḥ-ḍḥāhir} and so used the outward to bring the people to the inward and the inward to clarify and support the truth of the outer.

There are many shining facets to the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, but surely in the realm of his instruction, his guidance, his method of education, his tarbiyyah we must recognise that his system of supporting the outer by the inner and bringing people to the inner by the outer distinguishes him from his brothers who preceded him.

<sup>49</sup>transmitted by



